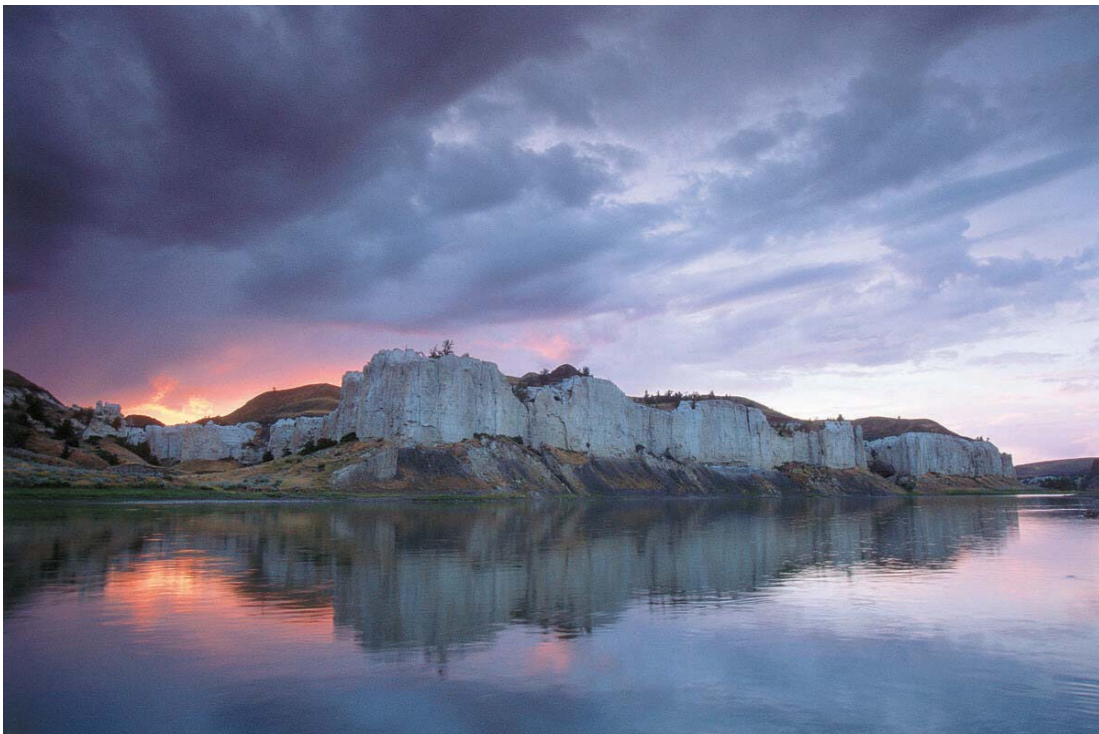


**UPPER MISSOURI RIVER BREAKS  
NATIONAL MONUMENT  
RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN  
SCOPING REPORT**



**December 30, 2002**

**Lewistown Field Office  
Airport Road, P.O. Box 1160  
Lewistown, Montana 59457**

# CONTENTS

<b>INTRODUCTION .....</b>	<b>1</b>
Purpose and Need for the Resource Management Plan .....	1
Description of the Planning Area .....	1
Description of the Scoping Process .....	1
Cooperating Agencies.....	3
<b>ISSUE SUMMARY .....</b>	<b>3</b>
Summary of Public Comments .....	3
Issues Identified During Scoping.....	12
Issues to be Resolved in the Resource Management Plan .....	13
Issues Addressed through Current Management, Policy or Administrative Action .....	22
Issues Beyond the Scope of the Resource Management Plan.....	24
Valid Existing Management to be Carried Forward .....	26
Anticipated Decisions to be Made .....	26
Special Designations.....	27
<b>DRAFT PLANNING CRITERIA .....</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>DATA SUMMARY.....</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>SUMMARY OF FUTURE STEPS IN THE PLANNING PROCESS.....</b>	<b>28</b>
Analysis of the Management Situation .....	28
Formulation of Alternatives.....	29
Estimating the Effects of Alternatives .....	29
Selection of the Preferred Alternative .....	29
Selection of the Resource Management Plan.....	29
<b>CONTACTS .....</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>TABLE OF ISSUES IDENTIFIED .....</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>APPENDIX A.....</b>	<b>A-1</b>

# **UPPER MISSOURI RIVER BREAKS NATIONAL MONUMENT RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN SCOPING REPORT**

**December 30, 2002**

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **Purpose and Need for the Resource Management Plan**

On January 17, 2001 President Clinton used the authority vested in him by Section 2 of the Antiquities Act of June 8, 1906 (34 Stat. 225, 16 U.S.C. 431) to sign a Proclamation creating the Upper Missouri River Breaks National Monument in northcentral Montana. The Proclamation recognizes that the spectacular array of biological, geological, and historical resources in this area have remained largely unchanged in the nearly 200 years since Lewis and Clark traveled through the area on their epic journey.

In a January 19, 2001 memorandum from the Secretary of the Interior to the Director of the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), the Secretary directed the BLM to prepare a management plan, including transportation and oil and gas field development plans, to address actions necessary to protect the objects identified in the Proclamation. The BLM policy is to establish resource management plans (RMPs) for national monuments (BLM Manual 1601.06B3). An environmental impact statement (EIS) will be prepared with the RMP.

The BLM Field Office in Lewistown, Montana, is responsible for overall management of public lands in the Upper Missouri River Breaks National Monument and will administer the plan. The purpose of the RMP will be to establish guidance, objectives, policies, and management actions for the Monument.

### **Description of the Planning Area**

The Monument consists of about 375,000 acres of public land in northcentral Montana in Chouteau, Blaine, Phillips, and Fergus Counties (see Figure 1). The boundary generally corresponds with the Upper Missouri National Wild and Scenic River (UMNWSR) from Fort Benton downstream to approximately Arrow Creek, where it then begins to widen out from 5 to 16 miles on either side of the Missouri River to the Charles M. Russell National Wildlife Refuge. Approximately 82,000 acres of private land and 39,000 acres of State land lie within the Monument boundary, but are not part of this designation.

### **Description of the Scoping Process**

The scoping process identifies land use issues and conflicts. These issues may stem from new information or changed circumstances, the need to address environmental protection concerns, or a need to reassess the appropriate mix of allowable uses based on new information.

Scoping is the first stage of the planning process and closely involves the public with identifying issues, providing resource and other information, and developing planning criteria to guide preparation of the RMP.

A Notice of Intent to prepare the RMP for the Upper Missouri River Breaks National Monument was published in the Federal Register on April 24, 2002. This notice served as the beginning of BLM's formal scoping process for the Monument.



The notice was followed by news releases in April and June, updates to the public (mailing list) in May and June, a newsletter in June, and a newspaper-type handout in July. All of these information tools conveyed information about the planning process, scoping open houses, potential issues, and questions/answers about the Monument.

To provide ample opportunities for public participation across northcentral Montana, the BLM held 11 scoping open houses in the following locations in July and August 2002:

July 8	Winifred	July 17	Cleveland
July 9	Lewistown	July 18	Malta
July 10	Big Sandy	July 22	Hays
July 11	Fort Benton	August 5	Great Falls
July 15	Havre	August 6	Billings
July 16	Chinook		

Over 320 people attended these open houses and the public quickly began sending a total of 5,700 scoping comment letters and e-mails. Some were as brief as a sentence or two; others were over 25 pages long. Some were form letters and others were original. Some offered substantive comments, while others conveyed a want or an opinion. They all indicated an interest in the management of public lands and resources.

The BLM considers scoping to be an open, long-term opportunity that does not end with the publication of this scoping report. Public comments will be accepted until the draft RMP is sent to the printer, although comments were most useful for this stage in the process if received by the end of August 2002.

## **Cooperating Agencies**

The BLM and the State of Montana are in the process of drafting a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) making the State a formal cooperating agency. The Department of Natural Resources and Conservation area manager in Lewistown is representing the State on the planning team.

The BLM and the four counties involved with the Upper Missouri River Breaks National Monument (Blaine, Chouteau, Fergus and Phillips) completed an MOU in December 2002 making the counties formal cooperating agencies in the resource management planning process. A Fergus County Commissioner represents the four counties on the planning team.

## **ISSUE SUMMARY**

### **Summary of Public Comments**

The BLM received 5,700 scoping comments, of which 5,300 were submitted electronically. Ten identified form letters or organized campaign form letters resulted in 5,100 of the total scoping comments. Scoping comments came from all 50 states, Puerto Rico, five Canadian provinces, and several foreign countries.

All scoping comments were read and 1,766 specific comments were coded into 31 subject categories and 55 subcategories (see Appendix A). These categories are guidance-based resource sections for an RMP (WO IB No. 2002-056), and the subcategories are based on the comments received. Most of the coded comment letters contained several specific comments covering various categories. All 1,766 specific comments were entered into a database and organized by category and subcategory in a 123-page comment summary. This "RMP Scoping Comment Summary" (December 2002) is available on our web site at <http://www.mt.blm.gov/ldo>. Viewing copies will also be available at the BLM Lewistown Field Office, Havre Field Station, Malta Field Office, and the libraries in Lewistown, Fort Benton, Chinook and Malta. Copies can also be requested by contacting the Lewistown Field Office, P.O. Box 1160, Lewistown, MT 59457.

Following is a summary of the 1,766 specific scoping comments by category. For this scoping report, the specific comments were grouped into similar topics and briefly summarized. This is only a summary that highlights comments from each category and does not include all the comments, suggestions, data, or concerns raised by the public. For a comprehensive summary, please refer to the RMP Scoping Comment Summary (December 2002).

## **Resources**

### Air Quality

The Monument should be maintained as a Class 1 air quality.

### Cultural Resources

As a means of recognizing the significance of the Lewis and Clark campsites and history, the riverboat history, and the homestead era history, the Monument should be designated a National Historic District.

The RMP should make reasonable provisions for archaeological research, which remains an essential and productive contributor to our understanding of past cultures and is an essential contributor to public education programs.

The management plan should consider the interpretation of the monument and recognize the important role human endeavors have played in establishing many of the values the monument seeks to preserve.

The consideration of cultural resources, especially Native American cultural, traditional and spiritual sites should be fully addressed in the analysis.

BLM should identify and inventory historic homesteads and other sites and place interpretive signs at such sites. Public education and interpretation should be emphasized to improve visitor understanding of archaeological resources and to prevent vandalism.

The BLM should outline specific management actions and measures to protect cultural, geological and paleontological resources, such as stabilization, fencing, signing, closures, or interpretative development.

It is imperative that the BLM minimize designated roads in the vicinity of known or potential archaeological sites so as not to make such sites a vehicle destination, and thereby increase their vulnerability to vandalism and degradation.

The BLM should determine the sites or areas that are most vulnerable to current and future impact and adopt management actions necessary to protect and restore cultural resources.

### Fish and Wildlife

The BLM should inventory and monitor all native and non-native wildlife species within the Monument.

Forage will not be properly allocated between livestock and wildlife.

The management plan should encourage restoring native species, protecting declining native species through reintroductions and conservation, and managing for natural diversity.

There should be no introduction of species such as elk, wolves, bear, sheep, buffalo, or birds.

The BLM should identify critical and key wildlife habitat types and biological corridors and ensure these habitats are protected, restored or maintained to promote natural wildlife diversity.



Hunting should continue to be used as a management tool and the State of Montana should retain the authority and responsibility of managing fish and game within the Monument.

#### Special Status Species

Sage grouse studies are ongoing to locate, inventory and quantify leks throughout the area. Sage grouse populations throughout the west have not been doing well; however, information suggests they are not suffering as much in this area. Several factors have been suggested for declines in grouse populations, including habitat loss, weather, predators, hunting, drought, and others.

To maintain sage grouse habitat, wildfires/prescribed fires should be discouraged in potential sagebrush regrowth areas.

Inventories should be conducted to assess threatened, endangered, and species of special concern. These inventories should be conducted by appropriate staff and during times of the year that specific species are most likely to be detected.

Designated recovery areas should be defined and maintained within the Monument, and the plan should protect appropriate species and existing habitat.

All prescriptions must identify effects for threatened, endangered, and/or sensitive species.

There is no need for large land tracts for endangered plants or small animals. Areas of a few acres are adequate for protection. "Natural areas" should not exceed 100 acres in size.

The Monument does not contain unique ecosystems that are not well preserved elsewhere in the region.

Threatened, endangered, and special status species, such as pallid sturgeon, black-footed ferrets, peregrine falcon, and bald eagles need to be protected and/or returned to their historic ranges within the Monument.

#### Geology

The BLM should facilitate appropriate geologic research to improve understanding of geologic processes within the Monument and increase public education and appreciation of geologic resources through interpretation.

#### Paleontology

The BLM should define the level of inventory needed to provide a basis for understanding the distribution, comparative importance, and potential uses of paleontological resources in the Monument.

The BLM should determine the sites or areas that are most vulnerable to current and future impact and adopt management actions necessary to protect and preserve paleontological resources.

#### Soil

The management plan should consider soil stability, including identifying areas of fragile soils, and how this will be considered in any project development along with the use of best management practices.

#### Vegetation/Native Plants

The management plan should have measurable objectives for improving riparian areas and cottonwood regeneration, which is a fundamental necessity.

Measures to encourage regeneration of cottonwoods include limited livestock grazing and limited hot season grazing, restoration of spring flooding, fencing, supplemental planting, weed control, and camping limits.

Controlling noxious and invasive plants should be a management priority in the Monument.

The management plan should identify weed species, locations, and reasons for establishment along with methods of control (e.g., biological, chemical, weed-free hay).

#### Visual Resources

The analysis should develop strong visual quality objectives and prescriptions for the area.

All Monument lands should be designated Class I or II visual resource management units and the visual resource contrast rating system used as a guide to analyze potential visual impacts of all proposed actions.

The BLM should study and identify the natural, night sky in the Monument and use this standard as the benchmark to prevent light pollution. Baseline data on light pollution could be used for establishing acceptable limits that are consistent with the Proclamation.

#### Water

Through the management plan, the BLM should ensure that enough water is available in the appropriate quality and quantity for the proper care of Monument resources.

### **Resource Uses**

#### Forest Products

Logging or other commercial forest activity would result in decreased aesthetic value that would detract from the purpose of the Monument.

Commercial activities such as logging can result in an influx of undesirable plants and weeds that would detract from the natural beauty of the Monument.

Commercial vegetation extraction would result in increased roads and trails, which detracts from the “wilderness experience.”

#### Lands and Realty

Land exchanges and conservation easements with willing landowners and land acquisitions (e.g., Land and Water Conservation funds) should be made a priority in the Monument so as to streamline and standardize management approaches and activities.

The management plan must look at additional public access to the Monument and additional access sites within the Monument (e.g., access to the river).

All private landowners should have full and adequate access to their land. Private citizens should have equal access to the area comparable to any commercial activity.

How will access be managed where select persons have access to public resources and the general public does not; and how will specific means of access be accommodated?

The management plan should look at administering filming permits.



### Livestock Grazing

Livestock grazing should be managed in a manner that will not harm the objects or resources that the Monument was established to protect. Grazing should be managed consistent with the primary purpose of resource protection.

Standards and Guidelines for livestock grazing should emphasize protection and enhancement of wildlife habitat, particularly during hot season grazing.

Livestock are impacting archaeological sites, reducing the quality of camping, impacting riparian vegetation, affecting upland health, and impacting wildlife habitat.

Range improvements must be maintained or upland health will suffer. Lack of access to range improvements will make livestock grazing management difficult.

Sound grazing management principles to protect the resource, which includes excellent wildlife habitat, should be a high priority.

The analysis should identify areas that are economically, biologically, or physically unsuitable for grazing. These would include areas that cannot be grazed in the near future due to damage from grazing.

It is critical that BLM Standards and Guidelines for grazing are met on all allotments containing riparian areas. Hot season grazing in these areas should be prohibited and grazing of riparian areas in general should be minimized.

The RMP should review grazing practices and make land use level decisions about whether grazing is suitable in all areas. This is appropriately done at the land use level stage and is based on FLPMA's multiple use standard, which requires the BLM to balance competing resource values to ensure that the public lands are managed in a manner "that will best meet the present and future needs of the American people."

BLM should ensure that grazing conforms to the Standards and Guidelines by placing a priority on assessing areas within the Monument. Where Standards and Guidelines are not being met, the BLM should take immediate action to rectify grazing management.

### Minerals

Extractive industries or mining activities have no place in a national monument.

Significant potential minerals could be extracted with minimal disturbance. Current mining rights should be honored but not renewed because there is plenty of land outside the Monument.

Oil and gas activity should be allowed because impacts on the land are minimal. Much of the infrastructure already exists and minor disturbance is required for drilling.

Oil and gas activity should be either banned or removed from the Monument. There should be no leasing within the Monument and it is wrong to have leases within the Monument. The need for energy resources is minimal versus the necessity of preserving lands within the Monument.

Oil and gas leases in the Monument are invalid as a result of the BLM's failure to prepare an EIS prior to the issuance of the leases.

Management of oil and gas development within the Monument must consider how much is adequate, where it will occur and what restrictions will be applied.

There are concerns regarding the various impacts of oil and gas development to wildlife, wildlife habitat, water quality, air quality, soils, view sheds and recreation within the Monument.

There are concerns regarding the standard BLM procedures to manage and permit general oil and gas operations for pad and road construction, protection of cultural and paleontology resources, and reclamation standards.

There are general concerns over how the terms for Monument leases are managed; for example, how shut-in gas wells hold leases beyond their primary term.

BLM must insure bonds are adequate for well abandonment and reclamation to protect the public from default.

### Recreation

The public and private lands must be identified (boundaries clearly marked) along the river and along the top (rim) where public lands meet private land.

There is concern about the effects of noise from OHVs, motorized watercraft and low flying aircraft on the “wilderness experience,” wildlife, and the natural quiet of the Monument.

There should be an emphasis on providing nonmotorized recreation opportunities.

Management needs to provide recreation opportunities while protecting and preserving the natural, historic, and primitive values of the Monument.

Do not overdevelop trails and facilities.

There is a need for more campgrounds in shaded areas. A permit system or designated campsite system is needed to reduce impacts. There should be no developed camping areas; keep all camping primitive. Camping should be removed from the river. Campsites should be segregated from cattle. Concentrate use in campgrounds where hygiene can be managed. Campsites should have large visible signs. More river patrols are needed to ensure campers are where they are supposed to be.

If there is too much pressure floaters should be permitted. We don’t want a floater permit system. There should be no floater allocation to commercial users. There should be a size restriction on floater group size. Opportunities for short trips through the White Cliff section should be considered. Do not turn the river into a “wilderness” for floaters. Floaters need to have private land signed so they can avoid it.

The no-wake rule should be yearlong. Personal watercraft and jet skis should be banned from the river. Motorized boats should not be allowed in the Monument year around. BLM should not use motorized boats. Limit horsepower. Hold motorized boats to no wake. Maintain the quiet character of the river. At least three days of the week should be motor free. Protect the quality of the experience but allow the majority to recreate, including motorized recreation. Look at the practice of motorized users going down river to secure the best campsites.

The public should have equal access to the river as outfitters. A cap should be placed on outfitters. No establishment of vested commercial rights. Commercial hunting should be allowed only where the public has access. Commercial outfitters should be permitted but limited. Commercial outfitting should be encouraged as these visitors have the least impact on the resource.

Hunting and fishing should be recognized as historic and traditional uses.

The BLM should not develop a user fee system.

## Transportation

The management plan should consider aviation in the Monument, including: aircraft access, leaving existing airstrips open, identifying potential new airstrips, enforcing appropriate procedures and access rules for pilots, and annual maintenance of airstrips. The demand for recreational opportunities for pilots and their families is increasing and no group should be excluded from enjoying this area.

Four known airstrips on BLM land in the Monument are referred to as Black Butte, Ervin Ridge, Bullwhacker Coulee, and Cow Creek. These airstrips should be included in the transportation plan.

In addition to recreational use of airstrips for camping and fishing opportunities, these airstrips provide a means of firefighting access and medical evacuation in emergency situations.

The airstrips in the Breaks that are now closed to the public, Slippery Ann and Sand Creek, should be open to public use.

To maintain the character of the Monument, the management plan should establish minimum overflight altitudes that prohibit low-level sightseeing trips, and prohibit the establishment of backcountry or recreational airstrips.

The management plan should prohibit new road construction and manage the existing road and trail network to maintain the primitive nature of the Monument. Motor vehicle travel on land in the Monument must be on officially established and designated roads. The BLM should designate a transportation network that allows the minimum amount of routes necessary to provide reasonable access to the Monument.

Off-road vehicle use should be restricted or prohibited in sensitive areas. Allowing unlimited access to existing roads invites abuse by ATVs, dirt bikes, snowmobiles, and other motorized vehicles.

The management plan must prohibit cross-country travel by all-terrain vehicles and other motorized vehicles such as motorcycles and snowmobiles. No motorized cross-country travel should be permitted and all areas of the Monument should be off limits to ORVs unless specifically designated as open.

Unnecessary roads, trails, and routes should be closed and damaged areas restored or reclaimed. Motorized vehicular traffic should be restricted with a “closed unless designated open” policy.

The existing road system in the breaks should remain open to vehicular travel without any undue seasonal restrictions.

The management plan should consider more and better roads for day use recreation within the Monument. There should be ground transportation access to many of the historical sites that are only accessible from the river.

The transportation plan should also consider the waterway.

BLM should maintain public access for hunting, fishing, and recreation. Road access must be provided and maintained for the local landowner as well as visitors to and within the area. It is important that you insure public access while keeping motorized use to a minimum. Additional access is needed to the Missouri River. Access should be made to the most desirable sites in the form of paved roads.

## **Fire**

The management plan should consider the level of fire protection in the Monument.

Wildland and prescribed fire can provide disturbed areas for noxious weed colonization.

Private property should be protected from wildland fire.

Wildland and prescribed fire can affect air quality, water quality, and sensitive species habitat.

Fire should be allowed to take its natural role in the environment, to benefit native plant species, vegetation mosaic and wildlife.

The management plan should look at preservation of fire-adapted ecosystems.

There is a need for fire risk and hazard planning and mitigation, and a hazardous fuels inventory in the Monument.

### **Special Designations**

Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) protection should be provided for sage grouse habitat.

Wilderness Study Areas (WSAs) should be protected under the non-impairment mandate and the resource management plan should establish a program for doing so.

WSAs should be managed as wilderness until such time that Congress acts; this includes managing and maintaining WSAs and other potential roadless areas in a pristine condition.

The resource management plan should not use restrictive policies to lock up Monument lands under the guise of enhancing a primitive and unconfined recreation experience.

The resource management plan should outline a specific schedule and timeline for reinventorying all Monument roadless areas with wilderness character, especially Bullwhacker Coulee.

### **Social and Economic Conditions**

#### Economic

The Monument can provide tourism, hunting, and other forms of recreation while bolstering the economy of Montana. Decisions affecting agriculture have far-reaching impacts that need to be considered in the management plan.

Visitor services and other developments need to maintain the wild character of the breaks.

The communities near the Monument can prosper with management of the Monument.

Management of the Monument must recognize continuation of existing landownership and the economic activities that are dependent on the land and its natural resources.

Recreational developments, including visitor services and interpretative facilities, should be placed in gateway communities.

An economic analysis should be prepared for any extractive development and ground disturbing activities and should disclose to what degree the activities are below cost.

#### Health and Safety

Additional risk of unwanted fires exists due to increased visitor use.

How are emergency services going to be provided on the river and how will this affect the local communities that may help provide these services? (Local communities should be reimbursed for the services they provide.)

Local community assistance is needed due to the increased fire protection workload from increased visitor use.

Dialog is insufficient between the BLM and communities in the Monument area related to fire protection and emergency services.

### Social

Preservation of the ranching culture is important.

The Missouri Breaks is a place away from the noise and chaos of city and everyday life. Americans need places where they can restore their sanity and this is one of those places.

Keep in mind the long-term focus. Society's preferences and needs come and go but only the land can endure.

## **Process**

### Management

The management process should be open, involve the public, and include compromise.

Management should enhance the natural values of the Monument.

The Monument should be managed to: provide conservation principles that will not allow development or uses that defeat the protective purpose of the designation; maintain the area as it is today for future generations; provide for traditional uses while ensuring the long-term health and viability of the area; preserve the wild and undeveloped character; maintain the primitive qualities of the area; protect the natural values and wild character while allowing controlled use; restore the area to the conditions of the time of Lewis and Clark, and manage for the wilderness character.

### Planning

The management plan should address the impacts on the objects for which the Monument was created.

The introduction of the management plan should deal with the history of the area, homesteading and ranching, along with the Lewis and Clark era.

Monument management must consider the baseline conditions in the area and the cumulative impacts occurring on adjacent lands both private and public.

Monument management needs to recognize the need for adequate funding, including enforcement and interpretation activities.

Monument management must recognize local and community participation, the scientific community, and all Americans.

Monument management must include the requirements under existing laws and regulations.

## Outside the Scope

The river's flow needs to correspond to historic floods and lows. The Army Corp of Engineers and Bureau of Reclamation should emulate historic flows via Canyon Ferry Dam and Tiber Dam on the Missouri and Marias Rivers.

Leave private land out of the Monument and let landowners choose for themselves whether to have their land included within the boundaries.

The boundary should be maintained as designated since the entire area is ecologically important.

## Issues Identified During Scoping

A planning issue is a "concern or controversy about existing and potential land and resource allocations, levels of resource use, production, and related management actions." An issue is a subject of interest or concern to the public or a particular group. This usually means that one or more individuals or groups are interested in a resource or land use on public land, that each may have different values for the resource, and that there are different ways (opportunities or alternatives) to resolve the issue. Issues may be identified by local, state or national needs or may reflect conditions specific to the Monument. Issue identification is an ongoing process. Identified issues may change throughout the planning process as new concerns are identified and others resolved.

Management concerns are issues that can be resolved by the BLM or another agency. While some concerns overlap issues, a management concern is generally more important to an individual or a few individuals, as opposed to a planning issue, which has a more widespread point of interest. Addressing management concerns in the Monument RMP helps ensure a comprehensive examination of BLM's land use management. Management concerns will be modified as the planning process continues; however, they will usually not be addressed in an RMP as thoroughly as an issue.

Preliminary issues and management concerns were identified in the Preparation Plan for the Monument RMP (February 2002). These early issues were identified by BLM and other agencies at meetings, and/or were brought up by individuals and groups by way of phone calls, e-mails, letters, and past meetings concerning the proposed monument proclamation. They represented BLM's expectations (prior to scoping) about what concerns or problems exist with current management. These preliminary issues were displayed during the scoping open houses and included in the June 2002 Newsletter.

The preliminary issues were then modified based on the scoping comments. Scoping also identified a new issue: economic and social conditions. The revised issues to be addressed in the Monument RMP (some of which overlap) are listed in the table below. Each issue has a number of different sub-issues that address more specific uses and resources.

**TABLE OF ISSUES IDENTIFIED**

- |   |
|---|
| <b>Issue 1: How will human activities and uses be managed, such as recreation, OHV management, and oil and gas exploration and development?</b> |
| <b>Issue 2: What facilities and infrastructure are appropriate to provide visitor interpretation and administration of the Monument?</b>        |
| <b>Issue 3: How will BLM manage biological, historical, cultural, and visual values of the Monument?</b>  |
| <b>Issue 4: How will Monument management be integrated with other agency and community plans?</b>   |
| <b>Issue 5: How will transportation and access be managed?</b>  |
| <b>Issue 6: How will Monument management affect economic and social conditions in the area?</b>   |

Issues identified during the scoping process were placed into one of the following three categories: 1) issues to be resolved in the RMP; 2) issues that can be resolved through current management, policy or administrative action; or 3) issues beyond the scope of the RMP. Issues to be resolved in the RMP are discussed in this section and issues in the other two categories are discussed in a later section.

## **Issues to be Resolved in the Resource Management Plan**

The six issues that will be addressed the Monument RMP are discussed in this section. Some of these issues overlap each other and some have a number of different sub-issues. Each issue includes some background information followed by planning questions that will be answered by the RMP.

### **Issue 1: How will human activities and uses be managed?**

The Monument provides for a variety of activities and land uses. Recreational activities include motorized and non-motorized touring, big and small game hunting, backpacking, horseback riding, sightseeing, pleasure driving, and river floating. The upcoming Lewis and Clark Bicentennial has caused an increase in recreational activity along the Missouri River, and a subgroup of the Central Montana Resource Advisory Council (RAC) is currently working on visitor use recommendations for the river portion of the Monument.

Commercial guides and outfitters, operating under special recreation permits from the BLM, provide services related to some recreational activities, such as hunting and river floating. Increased visitation has led to increased demands for visitor services, requests for outfitter permits, requests for aerial tours of the Monument, and a higher demand for emergency services such as search and rescue.

Monument and adjacent lands have also been used for a number of other non-recreational uses including rights-of-way, utility lines, communication sites, oil and gas development, livestock grazing, etc. All of these activities have an effect on the area environment as well as on local communities surrounding the Monument. Careful management of these activities is crucial to protecting the Monument resources. In some instances, such as oil and gas leases within the Monument, valid existing rights are in effect and must be recognized in the RMP.

### **Overall Management**

The Monument will be managed to protect the resources in accordance with the Proclamation, the Federal Land Policy and Management Act, and other applicable provisions of the law. The Proclamation specifically refers to the Monument's archaeological, historical, geological, and biological objects and provides for the proper care and management of the objects to be protected.

*How will the Monument be managed to provide conservation principles that will not allow development or uses that defeat the protective purpose of the designation?*

*How will the Monument be managed to maintain the area as it is today for future generations?*

*How will the Monument be managed to provide for traditional uses while ensuring the long-term health and viability of the area?*

*How will the Monument be managed to preserve the wild and undeveloped character?*

*How will development in the Monument be managed to maintain the primitive qualities of the area?*

*How will the Monument be managed to protect the natural values and wild character while allowing controlled use?*



*What will be the impacts on the objects for which the Monument was created given allocations proposed in any potential alternatives?*

#### Private and Commercial Recreation Use

Recreational activities occur throughout the area and include motorized and non-motorized touring, big and small game hunting, backpacking, horseback riding, sightseeing, pleasure driving, and river floating. Commercial guides and outfitters provide services for some recreational activities, such as hunting and river floating. Increased visitation has led to increased demands for visitor services and requests for outfitter permits.

*What range of recreational opportunities (vehicle touring, mountain biking, backpacking, car camping, horseback riding, boating/floating, etc.) should be provided to meet the wide variety of public demands while protecting and preserving the natural, historic, and primitive values of the Monument?*

*What BLM actions are needed to provide these opportunities in ways that ensure the protection of visitors and the natural resources, and are compatible with other land and resource uses in the Monument?*

*How will the management plan determine the location, distribution, signing, advertising, and use of dispersed camping areas along the river and in the uplands?*

*Are motorized watercraft impacting the physical conditions on the river and the solitude floaters come to enjoy, and to what extent should motorized watercraft be allowed?*

*How will the existing guide and outfitter use, both on the river and in the uplands, be managed in the future to ensure compliance with Monument objectives and improve public service in the Monument while ensuring equitable access to recreation opportunities for all users?*

*Should opportunities be provided for one-day trips in the white cliffs section of the river?*

*What methods and criteria will be used to determine the appropriate levels of use or carrying capacity limits for all types of private and commercial recreation use in the Monument? Is an allocation or permit system needed on the river to protect resources and limit social and physical impacts? If so, how will a permit system be developed that is equitable to all users? Is a designated campsite requirement needed to manage physical and social visitor use impacts? Is a group size limitation needed on the river, and if so, what is the appropriate size?*

*What criteria will be used to determine if new commercial uses, such as vending permits, should be allowed, where they should be allowed, and to what extent?*

*If recreation uses need to be more restrictively managed, what types of regulations would be implemented, when, and where, and how would they be administered and enforced?*

*How will conflicts between recreation visitors and other traditional users (grazing permittees, hunters, surrounding private land owners, etc.) be handled in order to eliminate or reduce these occurrences?*

*To what extent should recreation user fees be implemented within the Monument?*

#### Off-Highway Vehicle Management

Off-highway vehicle use in the Monument has increased over the last few years and is becoming a focus of concern for BLM managers, interest groups, and the general public. The Proclamation states, "For the purpose of protecting the objects identified above, the Secretary shall prohibit all motorized and mechanized vehicle use off road, except for emergency or authorized administrative purposes."

*What criteria will be used to determine roads and trails that are open for OHV use or roads and trails that need to be closed and reclaimed?*

*What routes are available for motorized and mechanical vehicle use, if any? What routes are available for only motorized or mechanized use? For example, are there routes that should remain open for mountain bike use only?*

*What are the needs and opportunities for special transportation and access development, such as backcountry byways, disabled access routes, horse trails, overlooks, etc.?*

#### Livestock Grazing Management

Many existing laws and regulations govern grazing on public lands. In 1997, the Secretary of the Interior approved new Standards for Rangeland Health and Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management, which applies to all BLM lands in Montana. The Proclamation states, "Laws, regulations, and policies followed by the Bureau of Land Management in issuing and administering grazing permits or leases on all lands under its jurisdiction shall continue to apply with regard to the lands in the Monument." Grazing uses in the Monument must be managed in compliance with these laws, regulations, and standards.

*How will livestock grazing be managed and improvements maintained or constructed throughout the Monument in order to be sensitive to the needs of the livestock/agriculture industry, result in as little impact as possible to the Monument's resources, and be in compliance with grazing regulations and standards?*

*Considerations in looking at livestock grazing management include the potential alteration of natural vegetation communities, recreation/grazing conflicts, riparian area management, range improvements/treatments/maintenance, and socio-economic impacts on permittees.*

#### Oil and Gas and Valid Existing Rights

Subject to valid existing rights, the Monument lands under the Proclamation are "appropriated and withdrawn from all forms of entry, location, selection, sale, or leasing or other disposition under the public land laws, including but not limited to withdrawal from location, entry, and patent under the mining laws, and from disposition under all laws relating to mineral and geothermal leasing, other than by exchange that furthers the protective purposes of the Monument." The 44,417 acres of Federal minerals in southern Blaine County that were leased for oil and gas exploration and development prior to the Proclamation shall remain open to such activities. The oil and gas development is to be managed "... subject to valid existing rights, so as not to create any new impacts that interfere with the proper care and management of the objects protected by this proclamation."

*How will the subject of valid existing rights be addressed in the plan? What is the energy resource within the Monument?*

*What level of development is necessary to promote conservation of oil and gas resources, comply with the requirements of the Proclamation, honor valid existing rights, and protect against drainage?*

*What conditions of approval are necessary on oil and gas exploration and development to protect the Monument's resources (e.g., wildlife, wildlife habitat, water quality, air quality, and soils) while not at a level with so many restrictions that lease operations are basically uneconomical?*

*Will a different approach be taken for managing oil and gas activity within the Monument versus how oil and gas activity is managed outside the Monument?*

*What indicators or units of measure will BLM use to determine if oil and gas operations interfere with the proper care and management of the Monument?*

### Fuel Wood and Vegetative Use Permits

The State Director's Interim Guidance for managing the Monument states it is not BLM's intent to conduct forest sales within the Monument. However, areas for forest products could be identified at BLM's discretion, as long as the resources for which the Monument was established are not adversely impacted. Also, before these products are lost to prescribed fire or mechanically cleared for fuel reduction, the BLM may consider a forest product sale. The harvesting of all woodland products would be fully analyzed in the plan for compliance with Monument management goals and objectives.

*What criteria will be used to determine if the harvesting of vegetative products, such as Christmas trees/boughs, posts/poles, saw logs, native plant seed, medicinal plants, berries, etc. is compatible with Monument management objectives?*

*If determined compatible with Monument management objectives, where and at what level of use would the harvesting of woodland products be allowed?*

### Utility Corridors, Rights-of-Way, and Withdrawals

There are seven right-of-way corridors in the Upper Missouri National Wild and Scenic River that were identified in the West HiLine RMP. New applications for rights-of-way would be processed pursuant to existing policies and practices, valid existing rights, and as necessary for access to private or State lands.

*What areas within the Monument should be identified as suitable for right-of-way routes for major utilities and roads?*

*How will increased demands for energy and communication rights-of-way be accommodated within the Monument?*

*What mitigation measures, or terms and conditions, would be appropriate for lands that are suitable for right-of-way routes?*

### Land Tenure Adjustments

As stated in the Proclamation, no public lands within the boundaries of the Monument will be disposed of other than by exchange, which would be done only when necessary to further the protective purposes of the Monument, to block up public land within the Monument, and to enhance the values for which the Monument was designated.

*What criteria should be applied when considering acquisition of non-federal lands to be added to the Monument?*

### Relationship with In-Holdings

The Proclamation designating the Monument applies to public lands within the boundary. Approximately 82,000 acres of private land lie within the Monument boundary.

*What management actions are necessary to ensure that access to private lands within the Monument boundary is secure?*

*What limitations, if any, are necessary to protect Monument resources from impacts of private land access?*

### Indian Reservations

The Monument does not border any American Indian Reservation. However, the Monument does border American Indian lands outside the boundary of the Fort Belknap Indian Reservation.

*What management actions are necessary to provide for consistent management activities that recognize values and uses on adjoining American Indian lands?*

**Issue 2: What facilities and infrastructure are appropriate to provide visitor interpretation and administration of the Monument?**

The planning area is characterized as a predominately natural environment with few facilities, other than along the Missouri River, for the comfort and convenience of visitors. Currently, BLM has a visitor center located at Fort Benton and several semi-developed sites along the Missouri River that have a boat ramp, vault toilets, three-sided shelters, and fire rings. Additional facilities may be needed for visitor safety and information, disabled access, and to address human sanitation, vehicle use, and other resource uses and impacts.

*What level of visitor services is compatible with the Monument resources and purpose?*

*To what extent, degree, and where are additional visitor facilities needed such as trails, restrooms, interpretive areas, campgrounds, public drinking water, waste disposal, and parking areas? Should existing facilities be removed or modified for compatibility with Monument goals?*

*What level of development, choice of standards, consistency, and kind of maintenance would be required for existing or proposed visitor facilities, including signing?*

**Issue 3: How will BLM manage biological, historical, cultural, and visual values of the Monument?**

Various ways of protecting resources include enforcing existing laws and regulations, educating visitors, managing access, setting management and research priorities, suppressing wildfire and managing fuels, restoring degraded ecological conditions, or some combination of these approaches.

Some of the major resources managed by the BLM in the Monument for which management decisions must be made include cultural, recreation, wildlife habitat, vegetation, biodiversity, riparian and water resources.

Cultural and Historical Values

The Monument contains a complex landscape and remarkable cultural and historical values ranging from old homesteads and steamboat graffiti, to buffalo jumps and teepee rings.

*How can the traditional ranching history of the area be integrated into management of the Monument?*

*Where and how will interpretation be used as an education tool to increase the public's awareness and appreciation of the Monument's cultural and historical resources while not diminishing the integrity and experience of visiting the location, or the setting being compromised by developed recreation, noise, and excess visitation?*

*What criteria will be used to determine if stabilization/preservation of features/structures is appropriate (cost vs. benefit or value of feature)?*

*What, if any, are the future research needs for the Monument?*

*What areas need additional inventory and evaluation for cultural and historical resources?*

*What role will partnerships play in site stewardship, stabilization, and interpretation of the cultural and historical features within the Monument?*

### Wildlife and Fisheries Habitat

Monument lands provide habitat for a variety of wildlife species. Increased use throughout the Monument, including recreation use and motorized vehicle use, requires careful planning to integrate habitat management with other resource programs in order to minimize impacts to wildlife species and their habitats.

*What level of animal damage control will be permitted, in what manner, and where?*

*How will beaver be managed to maintain riparian areas?*

*How will human activities that result in wildlife displacement be managed?*

*What information will be needed (e.g., crucial habitat, corridors, indicator species) to adequately assess wildlife habitat and develop management actions to improve or restore habitat conditions?*

*How will biodiversity in wildlife communities be maintained or restored?*

*How will prairie dog towns be managed in the Monument?*

*How will sage grouse habitat be managed in the Monument?*

*How will the management plan address threatened or endangered species, including recovery areas in the Monument? How will human activities or uses be managed to provide for the recovery of threatened or endangered species and species of special concern?*

### Vegetation

Vegetation provides food and cover for wildlife and domestic animals and scenic enjoyment for people. It is a key ingredient in determining the health of the public lands because it influences the quantity of water produced from area watersheds and affects overland flows and soil movement, which lead to erosion and loss of habitat. Non-native plants and noxious weeds displace native species, affect the structure of plant associations and their ecological function, and threaten biodiversity.

*What are the desired conditions of the vegetation types in the Monument?*

*How will biodiversity in vegetation and associated communities be maintained or restored?*

*How will BLM landscape health standards be achieved and to what extent will land use activities be modified to meet these standards?*

*How will the management plan address the erosion of sites and how will this be considered in any project development?*

*How should noxious and invasive plants be managed in the Monument? Which non-native plants are invasive or noxious? What can be done to manage noxious weeds and restore native plants? What prevention activities can be developed and implemented in the Monument to control the influx of undesirable plants and noxious weeds?*

### Riparian and Water Resources

Riparian areas attract and concentrate populations of area mammals, birds, reptiles, and amphibians; provide habitat for diverse vegetation communities not found elsewhere in the area; and help protect water quality by filtering sediments and protecting banks from erosion. Riparian areas, however, are affected by uses such as intensive recreation use, hoof trampling, improperly managed OHV use, removal of natural vegetation, beaver, livestock grazing, and other surface disturbances that can cause bank disturbance,

destabilization of stream channels, increased erosion and siltation, disruption to riparian-dependent plants and wildlife, and degradation of water quality.

*How will Monument riparian communities be protected and cottonwood stands regenerated, and how will this affect land uses?*

*What measures must be taken to ensure that the highest quality water standards are maintained throughout the Monument?*

*How is the Monument going to affect my existing water rights?*

*How will the exercise of private water rights affect Monument purposes?*

#### Areas of Critical Environmental Concern

Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) highlight areas that have significant values and where special management is needed to protect those values.

*Are there public lands in the Monument with sage grouse habitat that meet the criteria to be considered an ACEC?*

#### Fire Management

Fire could be a positive influence in much of this area and help restore natural fire regimes. However, fire occurrence in certain areas of heavy fuel loading (such as timbered coulees) and areas of heavy brush and grass growth could threaten improvements and structures in the Monument area. High-intensity fires can also threaten wildlife values and the desired condition of vegetation and riparian areas.

*In order to protect Monument values, does a fire management plan need to be developed specifically for the Monument? What level of fire protection is needed in the Monument?*

*For what purposes, and how, will fire be used as a management tool in the Monument? For example, will fire be used to help reduce hazardous fuel loads? Where are the hazardous fuels within the Monument? Should fire be allowed to take its natural role in the environment and how will the management plan consider fire risk, hazards, and mitigation?*

*What is the public perception of suppression philosophy and the impacts, such as smoke, to the Monument and surrounding communities?*

*What alternative methods for treating hazardous fuels will be permitted within the Monument?*

*How will wildland and prescribed fire be managed to enhance fire-adapted ecosystems and restore natural fire regimes?*

#### **Issue 4: How will Monument management be integrated with other agency and community plans?**

The BLM has a strong commitment to work with other agencies and communities in managing the Monument. Coordination with State agencies that have jurisdiction over resources within the Monument is essential for effective management of the Monument. These agencies include Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks and the Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation. Issues regarding the interplay of State and Federal authority will be examined as needed.

Monument objectives call for a significant portion of visitor services related to the Monument to be located in the surrounding communities rather than within the Monument boundary. In order to do this, a good working relationship with local tourism and service providers must be developed and maintained. Agreements with the local counties and communities need to be explored to coordinate activities and needs

such as planning, transportation, emergency services (i.e., search and rescue), law enforcement, infrastructure, and tourism.

#### County Land Use Plans

The BLM shall, to the extent practical, keep apprised of local land use plans, and assure that consideration is given to those local land use plans.

*What management actions in the Monument conflict with county ordinances, or are needed to make actions consistent across boundaries?*

*How will county road designations and increased levels of use be dealt with in the Monument plan?*

#### Emergency Services (Fergus, Chouteau, Blaine, and Phillips County Sheriffs)

The Fergus, Chouteau, Blaine and Phillips County Sheriff's Departments conduct emergency services in the Monument. BLM assists as requested with available resources. Assistance requests are made through the Field Staff Ranger in the Lewistown Field Office. The following questions will need to be answered in the plan to arrive at a single, coordinated and effective approach to handle these activities.

*What criteria will best determine when an emergency situation warrants the possible impacting of Monument values in order to properly deal with emergencies such as fires, emergency evacuations, law enforcement activities, deceased persons, or aircraft accidents/investigation?*

*What is the simplest process for considering and approving or rejecting requests for these activities anywhere in the Monument, assuming by their nature that the activities require a quick response from someone in authority?*

*What will be required, if anything, to establish or maintain cooperative relations with the County Sheriff's Departments relative to these activities?*

*Are restrictions needed to protect Monument values? How will the additional risk of human-caused fires brought on by increased visitor use be managed?*

#### Tourism Management

Monument objectives call for a significant portion of visitor services related to the Monument to be located in the surrounding communities rather than within the Monument boundary.

*How can the BLM best work with the tourism industry, local businesses, etc., to ensure that visitors to the Monument are provided with the right information about the Monument and the activities it offers?*

*How will tourism be managed to prevent degradation of the resources for which the Monument was designated?*

*What tools/sources such as interpretation and advertising need to be utilized on local, regional, and national levels for information and education about the Monument?*

*What messages about the Monument need to be conveyed?*

*How will BLM incorporate visitor and resident preferences into Monument management?*



## U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Consultation

The Endangered Species Act, Section 7 Programmatic Consultation and Coordination will be conducted as necessary during plan development.

*Early interagency communication, coordination, consultation and conferencing on candidate, proposed, and listed species will take place prior to and during plan development.*

### **Issue 5: How will transportation and access be managed?**

A network of unimproved dirt roads, gravel roads, and resource roads currently provides access to many areas of the Monument. County roads are routinely graded and maintained by Fergus, Blaine, Chouteau, and Phillips Counties, while BLM-managed routes receive various levels of maintenance based on a BLM maintenance schedule.

*What roads and trails should the BLM provide for access to or across public lands in the planning area? How will the need for State and private land access be addressed in the plan? How will access be managed where select persons have access to public resources and the general public does not; and how will specific means of access be accommodated?*

*Are the current roads adequate or do they need to be modified to increase protection for Monument resources, reduce user conflicts, and/or provide better travel opportunities for Monument users? How should management of roads accommodate the elderly and disabled? How should the need for new road construction and maintenance be addressed in the plan?*

*How many and what type of motorized travel routes are needed on public lands in the Monument, and what type of vehicle restrictions, if any? Is it necessary to distinguish between upland use and river access needs?*

*What roads and trail easements should be acquired to provide reasonable public and administrative access to the Monument lands?*

*What roads and trails in the Monument should be closed and/or rehabilitated to protect resources, or eliminate or reduce use conflicts?*

*How should aircraft be managed in the Monument? Is there a need for designated landing strips or areas, and what level of standard and maintenance should be attached to airstrips? How will BLM interact with airspace managers to provide for or influence direction of air traffic compatible with Monument goals?*

### **Issue 6: How will Monument management affect economic and social conditions in the area?**

The Monument can provide tourism, hunting, and other forms of recreation while bolstering the economy of Montana. Management of the Monument must recognize continuation of existing landownership and the economic activities that are dependent on the land and its natural resources.

*What is the effect on the overall economy and local culture if a shift is made from production of products from the public land to other emphasis areas?*

*How will the management plan consider decisions affecting agriculture that have a far-reaching impact?*

*Recreational developments, including visitor services and interpretive facilities, should be placed in gateway communities.*

*An economic analysis should be prepared of any extractive development and ground-disturbing activities and should disclose to what degree the activities are below cost.*

*Preservation of the ranching culture is important.*

## **Issues Addressed through Current Management, Policy or Administrative Action**

Current management, BLM policy, or administrative action can address some of the issues raised during scoping. These issues are discussed in this section.

*How will Monument resources be managed to maintain the area as a Class 1 airshed?*

The State of Montana has delegated responsibility for management of the Clean Air Act, including classification of airsheds. The Monument is within airshed 9 and is a Class 2 airshed. The BLM will comply with national and State air quality standards.

*How will management consider water quality and water rights on the Missouri River and its tributaries?*

Surface and groundwater quality must be maintained to meet or exceed State and Federal water quality standards. Montana water laws govern water rights. BLM policy and current laws address this issue.

*Livestock are adversely impacting riparian and upland health.*

The Standards for Rangeland Health and Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management were established in 1997 and apply to all BLM lands in Montana, including lands within the Monument. The Proclamation affirms that “Laws, regulations, and policies followed by the Bureau of Land Management in issuing and administering grazing permits or leases on all lands under its jurisdiction shall continue to apply with regard to the lands in the Monument.” Therefore, circumstances of not meeting riparian or upland health are already being addressed in recently implemented plans specifically directed at Standards for Rangeland Health.

*Will forage be properly allocated between livestock and wildlife?*

Forage allocation to various uses in the Monument area was analyzed in the Missouri Breaks EIS in 1979. Since 1979, the West HiLine RMP and Judith-Valley-Phillips RMP brought forward these allocations. All activity planning and implementation efforts stipulate that ongoing monitoring will be used as a basis to adjust allocations, and the adjustments are made on a periodic basis as the need has been (and will be) apparent. (Activity planning includes watershed plans, allotment management plans, habitat management plans, etc.)

*Range improvements must be maintained or upland health will suffer. Lack of access to range improvements will make management of grazing difficult.*

Maintenance of and access to range improvements is an ongoing process consistent with completed watershed plans and BLM policy.

*Livestock grazing is negatively impacting wildlife habitat.*

When livestock grazing is identified as the cause of not meeting Standards (particularly Standard 5 dealing with habitat), existing regulations and policy are in place to make necessary adjustments. All activity planning and implementation efforts stipulate that ongoing monitoring will be used as a basis to adjust allocations, and the adjustments are made on a periodic basis as the need has been (and will be) apparent. (Activity planning includes watershed plans, allotment management plans, habitat management plans, etc.)

*To what extent will mining be allowed in the Monument?*

If mining claims are tested and found to be valid, the claimants would be considered to have valid and existing rights. If mining claims are tested and found to be invalid, the claims would be terminated. Per the Proclamation, no new mining claims could be accepted.

*To what extent should BLM administer filming permits?*

The administration of filming permits is addressed by current policy (IM MT-098-063).

*To what degree should use of campfires be allowed?*

The use of campfires, especially during periods of drought, is a coordinated effort with other State and Federal agencies. This is considered an administrative function.

*How does BLM decide what constitutes a road?*

Roads are classified as collector roads, local roads, or resource roads as defined in BLM Manual 9113. This issue is currently addressed by BLM policy.

*Management of the Monument needs to recognize the need for adequate funding, including enforcement and interpretation activities. Does BLM have the capability to implement a management plan for the Monument?*

Decisions from an RMP would be implemented over a period of years depending on budget and staff availability. Funding levels affect the timing and implementation of management actions and project proposals, but do not affect the decisions. This issue is addressed by BLM policy and budgets.

*WSAs should be protected under the non-impairment mandate and the RMP should establish a program for doing so. WSAs should be managed as Wilderness until such time that Congress acts; this includes managing and maintaining WSAs and other potential roadless areas in a pristine condition.*

The WSAs within the Monument will be managed based on the Missouri Breaks Wilderness Suitability Study/EIS and consistent with Interim Management Policy and Guidelines for Lands Under Wilderness Review (BLM Manual H-8550-1). This issue is currently addressed by BLM policy.

*The RMP should outline a specific schedule and timeline for reinventorying all Monument roadless areas with Wilderness character, especially Bullwhacker Coulee.*

A formal wilderness inventory of this area was completed in 1979 and 1980. The BLM has no information to suggest that this inventory needs revision. The public does have the opportunity to help provide information to the BLM concerning wilderness characteristics and inventory.

*How will fires be managed within the Monument, especially those that threaten lands or property outside the Monument or private lands within the Monument?*

BLM will fully suppress any fires occurring on public lands that threaten private land or BLM structures/improvements. This issue is addressed by BLM policy.

*How are emergency services going to be provided on the river and how will this affect the local communities that may help provide these services? (Local communities should be reimbursed for the services they provide.) Local community assistance is needed due to increased fire protection workload from increased visitor use. Insufficient dialog exists between the BLM and communities in the Monument area related to fire protection and emergency services.*

The Fergus, Chouteau, Blaine and Phillips County Sheriff's Departments conduct emergency services in the Monument. BLM assists as requested with available resources. Emergency services are guided by BLM policy and administrative action.

*The process of management should be open, involve the public, and include compromise. Management of the Monument must recognize local and community participation, the scientific community, and all Americans.*

Preparation of the RMP will be consistent with the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) and NEPA, which provide for public involvement. This issue is addressed by law and BLM policy.

*Management of the Monument must consider the baseline conditions in the area and the cumulative impacts occurring on adjacent private and public lands.*

The current resource conditions in the Monument and the analysis of effects are guided by the regulations for implementing NEPA. The RMP/EIS will be consistent with current law, regulations, and policy.

*Management of the Monument must consider the requirements under existing laws and regulations.*

Preparation of the RMP will be consistent with FLPMA and NEPA. This issue is addressed by law, regulations, and BLM policy.

*What type of visitors are we to expect?*

Management of the Monument will consider what range of recreational opportunities should be provided to meet the wide variety of public demands. The BLM cannot control the type of visitor who may want to come to the Monument.

*The Breaks is a place away from the noise and chaos of city/everyday life. Americans need places where they can restore their sanity and this is one of those places. Keep in mind the long-term focus. Society's preferences and needs come and go but only the land can endure.*

The management plan will look at the social conditions in the area along with the opportunities provided by the Monument consistent with the Proclamation and how those opportunities affect social well-being. This issue is addressed by BLM policy.

## **Issues Beyond the Scope of the Resource Management Plan**

Some issues raised during scoping are beyond the scope of the RMP and cannot be addressed. These issues are discussed in this section.

*How will the quality of the river experience be maintained or improved relative to supersonic flights and sonic booms?*

The Monument is located beneath the Hays Military Operations Area (MOA). The Hays MOA overlies a large area of northcentral Montana at altitudes ranging from 300 feet above ground level, up to but not including 18,000 feet above mean sea level. The Federal Aviation Administration has the responsibility to plan, manage, and control the structure and use of all airspace over the U.S., including the Hays MOA. This issue is beyond the scope of the RMP since the BLM does not have jurisdiction or authority for this MOA.

*Hunting should continue to be used as a management tool and the State of Montana shall retain the authority and responsibility of managing fish and game within the Monument. How will current hunting and trapping uses of public land within the Monument be managed in the future?*

The Proclamation designating the Monument did not “... enlarge or diminish the jurisdiction of the State of Montana with respect to fish and wildlife management.” This issue is beyond the scope of the RMP since the BLM does not have the jurisdiction or authority for managing fish and game within the Monument.

*What will be the effect on the livestock industry if the recreating public is granted exclusive use of the river corridor?*

The Proclamation designating the Monument provided that the area be managed “... pursuant to applicable legal authorities, including the National Wild and Scenic Rivers Act ...” and that “Laws, regulations, and policies followed by the Bureau of Land Management in issuing and administering grazing permits or leases ... shall continue to apply.” The Upper Missouri was designated a Wild and Scenic River in 1976 with a multiple use mandate, which means the BLM must treat all the resources present (PL 94-486). This issue is beyond the scope of the RMP since the BLM cannot grant exclusive use of the river to the recreating public under PL 94-486 or the Proclamation.

*Oil and gas leasing should not be allowed within the Monument.*

Leasing of Federal minerals is beyond the scope of this RMP since the Proclamation designating the Monument precludes further oil and gas leasing of Federal minerals within the area.

*Oil and gas leases in the Monument are invalid as a result of the BLM's failure to prepare an EIS prior to the issuance of the leases.*

Under the Proclamation the BLM will “... manage development of existing leases subject to valid existing rights.” In the area of existing leases in south Blaine County, management is addressed by the West HiLine RMP/EIS approved in 1988 and 1992. Management prior to completion of the West HiLine RMP was addressed by the appropriate management framework plan (MFP) and the Oil and Gas Environmental Assessment of BLM Leasing Program (1981). This issue is beyond the scope of this RMP since the West HiLine RMP/EIS addressed oil and gas leasing.

*How will private property be protected from the impact of campers?*

The Proclamation designating the Monument applies to “all lands and interests in lands owned or controlled by the United States within the boundaries of the area described on the map ....” This issue is beyond the scope of the RMP since management of the Monument does not apply to private property.

*How should the communities near the Monument prosper with management of the Monument?*

The BLM has a strong commitment to work with communities in managing the Monument, including activities and needs such as planning, transportation, emergency services, law enforcement, infrastructure, and tourism. How a specific community can prosper is determined by that individual community. This issue is beyond the scope of the RMP since the BLM cannot determine how specific communities can prosper with management of the Monument.

*How will the Monument be managed to restore the area to the conditions of the time of Lewis and Clark?*

The Proclamation designating the Monument provided that the area be managed “... pursuant to applicable legal authorities, including the National Wild and Scenic Rivers Act ...” and the “establishment of the Monument is subject to valid existing rights.” The Upper Missouri was designated a Wild and Scenic River in 1976 with a multiple use mandate, which means the BLM must treat all the resources present (PL 94-486). This issue is beyond the scope of the RMP since the BLM

must manage the river under a multiple use mandate as required by PL 94-486 and manage the Monument subject to valid existing rights.

*The river's flow needs to correspond to historic floods and lows. The Army Corp of Engineers and Bureau of Reclamation should emulate historic flows via Canyon Ferry Dam and Tiber Dam on the Missouri and Marias Rivers.*

This issue is beyond the scope of this RMP since the BLM does not have the jurisdiction or authority over water flows on the Missouri and Marias Rivers.

*Leave private land out of the Monument and let landowners choose for themselves whether to have their land included within the boundaries. The boundary should be maintained as designated since the entire area is ecologically important.*

The Proclamation designating the Monument applies to “all lands and interests in lands owned or controlled by the United States within the boundaries of the area described on the map ....” The boundary was established by the Proclamation. This issue is beyond the scope of this RMP since the BLM does not have the jurisdiction or authority to modify the boundary.

## **Valid Existing Management to be Carried Forward**

The plan will address and integrate, to the degree possible, all BLM management plans related to management of the lands in the Monument including, but not limited to, the West HiLine RMP, Judith-Valley-Phillips RMP, Missouri Breaks Wilderness Suitability Study/EIS, Upper Missouri National Wild and Scenic River Management Plan, fire management plans, livestock grazing allotment management plans and watershed plans, wildlife habitat management plans, cultural resource management plans, and recreation management plans.

The Upper Missouri River Breaks National Monument includes the UMNWSR. The West HiLine RMP addressed management of the UMNWSR and met the conformity requirements of section 3(d)(2) of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act. The boundary and classification by river mile of the UMNWSR is addressed in the Management Plan Update (1993).

Following a May 1999 visit to the UMNWSR, Secretary of Interior Bruce Babbitt asked the Central Montana RAC to consider the issues affecting the proposed “special management area” and to provide him with recommendations for future management of the area. The RAC held four public meetings to actively solicit public input regarding management options for the Missouri River Breaks. In December 1999 the RAC provided the Secretary with its report on the Upper Missouri River Breaks area. The RMP will address and integrate, to the degree possible, the 1999 RAC report to the Secretary, and recommendations from the RAC and its subgroups addressing visitor use.

## **Anticipated Decisions to be Made**

The plan will be comprehensive in nature, and will resolve or address issues within the Monument which are identified through agency, interagency, and public scoping efforts. The plan decisions will fall into two categories: desired outcomes (goals, standards, and objectives), and allowable uses and actions to achieve desired outcomes. The plan will address program-specific and resource-specific decision guidance consistent with the BLM Land Use Planning Handbook (H-1601-1).

The plan will explain or identify the current management situation, desired future conditions to be maintained or achieved, cultural resource management goals, goals for continued management of energy resources, and goals for multiple resource management within the Monument. Appropriate methods and management actions necessary to achieve Monument objectives will be determined.

## **Special Designations**

The planning process for the RMP will consider the ACEC nomination by the Montana Wildlife Federation for sage grouse habitat within the Monument.

The planning process for the RMP will review and evaluate intermittent stream data north of the Missouri River to determine if any segments are eligible for inclusion in the National Wild and Scenic Rivers system per Section 5(d) of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act. Stream data south of the Missouri River were addressed in the Judith-Valley-Phillips RMP approved in September 1994.

## **DRAFT PLANNING CRITERIA**

The BLM planning regulations (43 CFR 1610.4-2) require development of planning criteria to guide preparation of a resource management plan. Planning criteria are the constraints or ground rules that guide and direct the preparation of the plan. They ensure the plan is tailored to the identified issues and that unnecessary data collection and analyses are avoided. Planning criteria are based on applicable laws and regulations, agency guidance, the result of consultation and coordination with the public, other Federal, State and local agencies and governmental entities, and American Indian tribes.

The following preliminary criteria were developed and will be reviewed by the public in a January 2003 Newsletter. After the public review, they will become proposed criteria, and can be added to or changed as the issues are addressed or new information is presented. The Monument Manager will approve the criteria and any changes.

The plan will be completed in compliance with the Federal Land Policy and Management Act and all other applicable laws. It will meet the requirements of the establishing Proclamation to protect the Monument's cultural features and natural resources.

The Upper Missouri River Breaks National Monument planning team will work cooperatively with the State of Montana, tribal governments, county and municipal governments, other Federal agencies, and all other interested groups, agencies, and individuals. Public participation will be encouraged throughout the process.

The plan will not address boundary adjustments. Boundaries were established by the President and cannot be adjusted administratively by the BLM.

The plan will establish the guidance upon which the BLM will rely in managing the Monument.

The planning process will include an Environmental Impact Statement that will comply with the National Environmental Policy Act.

The plan will emphasize the protection and enhancement of the Monument's natural resources while at the same time providing the public with opportunities for compatible recreation activities.

The plan will recognize valid existing rights within the Monument and outline the process the BLM will use to address applications or notices filed after completion of the plan on existing claims or other land use authorizations. The plan will include a field development scenario for oil and gas development.

The lifestyles and concerns of area residents, including grazing and ranching, will be recognized in the plan.



Any lands located within the Monument's administrative boundary that are acquired by the BLM to accomplish purposes for which the Monument was designated, will be managed consistent with the plan, subject to any constraints associated with the acquisition.

The plan will recognize the State's responsibility and authority to manage wildlife. The BLM will consult with Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks as necessary.

The plan will include a transportation plan that addresses transportation and access, and will identify where better access is warranted, where access should remain as is, and where decreased access is appropriate to protect Monument resources and manage visitation.

Laws, regulations, and policies other than the Monument Proclamation guide the management of grazing. The plan will incorporate the Standards for Rangeland Health and Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management. It will include a strategy for ensuring that proper grazing practices are followed within the Monument.

The planning process will involve American Indian tribal governments as necessary and will provide strategies for the protection of recognized traditional uses.

Decisions in the plan will strive to be compatible with the existing plans and policies of adjacent local, State and Federal agencies as long as the decisions are consistent with the purposes, policies, and programs of Federal law, and regulations applicable to public lands and the Monument designation.

## **DATA SUMMARY**

In many cases, existing resource information available in the Lewistown and Malta Field Offices will be used in preparation of the RMP. Much of this data, however, needs to be updated, compiled, and put into digital format for use in the planning process and for development of resource maps for the plan. GIS theme maps are the building blocks to quantify resources, create maps, and represent resource data during alternative formulation. In addition to existing information, new data are also needed in a number of areas to provide baseline inventory and resource condition information in the following areas: transportation, wildlife, recreation, and fire.

Data will be obtained at the 1:24,000 scale for all GIS layers, if possible, a format that will be a useful tool for all BLM programs in the coming years. New data acquired will have associated metadata in conformance with Bureau standards.

The Preparation Plan completed in February 2002 included a Data Status Table. This table includes the current data available, data needs, and a strategy to obtain the needed data for each program area. This table will be updated upon completion of the analysis of the management situation (scheduled for March 2003), draft RMP/EIS, and final RMP/EIS.

## **SUMMARY OF FUTURE STEPS IN THE PLANNING PROCESS**

Scoping is only the first step in the planning process. Several more steps are necessary to complete the resource management plan including analysis of the management situation, formulation of alternatives, estimating the effects of alternatives, selection of the preferred alternative, and selection of the resource management plan.

### **Analysis of the Management Situation**

The next step in the process, analysis of the management situation, will involve the use of existing information and data from new inventories to describe the resources within the Monument, current management of the area,

and opportunities to resolve the issues identified during scoping. This analysis provides a reference for developing and evaluating alternatives.

This step will occur from October 2002 through March 2003, with some inventories during the spring and early summer of 2003. The public will be informed of this process through updates as the team prepares the analysis of the management situation.

### **Formulation of Alternatives**

Alternatives will be formulated by identifying a range of reasonable combinations of resource uses and management practices that address issues identified during scoping and that offer distinct choice among potential management strategies. This will include a no action alternative or continuation of current management.

This step will occur from April 2003 through September 2003, and will involve the public through updates, newsletters, and open houses/workshops in July 2003 specific to alternative development.

### **Estimating the Effects of Alternatives**

Once the alternatives are developed, the next step involves estimating the effects of each alternative on the environment and the management situation.

This step will occur from October 2003 through May 2004 and will involve the public through updates as the team prepares the resource management plan.

### **Selection of the Preferred Alternative**

The Monument Manager and Field Managers (Lewistown and Malta Field Offices) will recommend to the State Director a preferred alternative that best resolves planning issues and promotes balanced multiple use objectives. The State Director will approve the selection of the preferred alternative along with the other alternatives under consideration through release of the draft resource management plan and environmental impact statement.

This step will begin with release of the draft document in July 2004 for a 90-day public comment period ending in September 2004. This will involve the public through news releases, newsletters, and open houses in July 2004.

### **Selection of the Resource Management Plan**

Based on the information in the draft plan and public comments, the BLM will select a proposed resource management plan and present it to the public as the final resource management plan and environmental impact statement.

This step will occur from October 2004 through release of the final plan in May 2005. This will involve the public through news releases and a 30-day protest period on the final document.

## **CONTACTS**

Gary Slagel, Monument Manager  
(406) 538-1950

or

Jerry Majerus, Project Manager  
(406) 538-1924

BLM Lewistown Field Office  
Airport Road, P.O. Box 1160  
Lewistown, MT 59457  
E-Mail: [monumentrmp@blm.gov](mailto:monumentrmp@blm.gov)  
Web Site: <http://www.mt.blm.gov/ldo>

Appendix A  
Upper Missouri River Breaks National Monument  
Scoping Report Codes

Category	Category No.	Subcategory No.	Category	Category No.	Subcategory No.
<b>Resources</b>			<b>Resource Uses (Continued)</b>		
Resources - General	1000		Recreation	2250	
Air Quality	1050		Camping		2251
Cultural Resources	1100		Floating		2252
Fish and Wildlife	1150		Motorized Watercraft		2253
Wildlife Species		1151	Outfitting		2254
Habitat		1152	Hunting		2255
Animal Damage Control		1153	User Fees		2256
Wildlife and Grazing		1154	Non-Motorized Trails		2257
Geology	1200		Transportation	2300	
Paleontology	1250		Aircraft landings		2310
Special Status Species (includes Animals, Fish, Plants)	1300		Aircraft Overflights		2311
Species and Habitat Inventories		1301	Roads (General)		2320
Prairie Dog		1303	Roads (Upland)		2321
Sage Grouse		1304	Roads (River Access)		2322
Additional Threatened, Endangered and Sensitive Species		1305	<b>Fire</b>		
Threatened, Endangered and Sensitive Species and Grazing		1306	Use and Suppression	3050	
Soil	1350		Rehabilitation		3051
Vegetation/Native Plants	1400		Ecology and History	3100	
Riparian		1401	Risk and Hazard	3150	
Upland		1402	<b>Special Designations</b>		
Noxious and Invasive Plants		1403	ACECs	4050	
Visual Resources	1450		Wild and Scenic Rivers	4200	
Water	1500		Wilderness Study Areas	4250	
<b>Resource Uses</b>			Wilderness Evaluation	4300	
Resource Uses – General	2000		<b>Social and Economic Conditions</b>		
Forest Products	2050		Economic	5050	
Lands and Realty	2100		Development		5051
Public Access		2101	Communities		5052
Access		2102	Private Land		5053
Utility and Communication Corridors		2103	Facilities		5054
Livestock Grazing	2150		Analysis		5055
Minerals	2200		Health & Safety – Emergency Services		5151
Oil and Gas Activity		2210	Health & Safety – Waste Management		5152
Oil and Gas Resource Value and Monument Lands		2211	<b>Social</b>	5200	
Oil and Gas Leasing within Monument		2212	<b>Process</b>		
Oil and Gas Lease Validity		2213	Process – General	6000	
Oil and Gas Operations Management		2214	Management	6050	
Oil and Gas Impacts within Monument		2215	Conserve		6051
Internal Oil and Gas Requirements		2216	Maintain		6052
Oil and Gas Lease Management		2217	Multiple Use		6053
			Preserve		6054
			Primitive		6055
			Protect		6056
			Restore		6057
			Wilderness		6058
			Planning/NEPA	6100	
			Analysis		6101
			Budget/Staff		6102
			Public Involvement		6103
			Regulations		6104
			Outside Scope	6500	